

Sounding Board Convened for the I-5, Mellen Street to Grand Mound Project

In June 2006, WSDOT convened a Sounding Board to provide input to WSDOT on key issues related to the widening of I-5 and to assure that the process is open and responsive to public needs and concerns.

Sounding Board members include the following:

- Centralia: Tim Browning, Mayor; Ted Shannon, Councilmember; and Dick Southworth, Director of Public Utilities
- Chehalis: Chad Taylor, Councilmember
- Lewis County: Larry Keeton, Chief of Staff
- Lewis County Transportation Coalition : Judy DeVaul
- Providence Hospital: Ken Boucher, Assistant Administrator
- Centralia Community College: Steve Ward, Vice President for Administration and Finance
- Business Perspectives: Scott Horner, RE/MAX, and Heidi Pehl, Uhlmann Motors

The role of the Sounding Board was to provide input on options at each of the four initial locations for the Mellen Street interchange. These locations were the existing Mellen Street interchange, Alder Street, the RV Park, and Salzer Creek. The Group's input would help WSDOT select the best options at each of these locations to take forward into more detailed design.

The Sounding Board met on June 13, 20, 28 and July 6 in meetings that lasted two and one-half hours. At the June 13 meeting WSDOT provided a briefing on the reasons for looking at alternative locations for the Mellen Street interchange. Many of these reasons were summarized in a document prepared by Mayor Browning. In response, Sounding Board members raised issues and concerns and requested additional information. At subsequent meetings, after reviewing how the options could work with the existing transportation network and other considerations, the Sounding Board members recommended that WSDOT analyze the following options/locations:

- Existing Mellen Street: Single Point Urban Interchange
- Alder Street: Tight Diamond configuration
- RV Park: Modified diamond with roundabouts

At the Sounding Board's July 6 meeting, representatives from the cities of Centralia, Chehalis and Lewis County told WSDOT that the Salzer Creek location is not consistent with their current or future plans. As a result of their comments WSDOT agreed to withdraw the Salzer Creek location from any further engineering analysis and evaluation.

Over the longer term, the Sounding Board will be asked to identify community issues and concerns as input into the project team's analysis and to review and to comment on informational materials in advance of public meetings so they meet the needs of the public.